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ABSTRACT

This monograph contains 47 lesson ideas that elementary and secondary English teachers may find useful for classroom activities. Each item describes the aim of the lesson and the grade level and provides suggestions on how to carry out the lesson. Some of the activities suggested include "Advertising a Play," "Write Your Own Obituary," "Studying the Novel through Poetry," "Recognizing a Speaker's Tone," "Book Display for Reluctant Readers," "Public Speaking," "Creative Writing," and "Man and His Earth." Depending on the aims of the lessons, additional instructional materials and reading materials are recommended. This collection of practical suggestions for class activities is reprinted from past issues of "Resources," which appears regularly in "English in Australia." (RB)

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RESOURCES 1

— IDEAS FOR ENGLISH LESSONS

A collection of practical suggestions reprinted from issues of "English In Australia".

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RESOURCES I — IDEAS FOR ENGLISH LESSONS

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— Michael Dilena, Editor

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1 THE BENEFACTOR

AIM: **This lesson is aimed at enlightened group discussion over a matter of practical decision-making and social priorities. It may produce useful information about the attitudes and social values of those in the group.**

LEVEL: **Designed for secondary or adult classes.**

1 Explain the following difficulty which a council of a suburb or town has recently faced:

a) An old lady has died. In her will it is discovered that a large deserted building in the area belongs to her and that she has left it to the council with a sum of $20,000, both to be made use of in whatever way will **most benefit** those citizens **most in need.**

b) The building is on an acre of ground which is full of weeds and rubbish. It is poorly fenced. The building is of stone and is in good repair apart from the windows and doors. The woodwork needs painting.

c) The building has two floors and a large cellar. The floor area of each storey is 30′ x 90′. The top floor is divided into small rooms. The ground floor is one large room. The cellar is slate paved but has pillars supporting the roof at intervals.

d) There are no toilet facilities, but water and power is available. The ground floor is eaten away with white ants.

2 Break into small groups of five or six. Ask the groups to elect a chairman and a reporting secretary.

3 Decide to which use the building would **best** be put to serve the needs of the local community—the community in which the group actually lives.

4 Plan in detail how the money should be spent, and how the building should be modified best to suit the needs to be filled. Sketches should be made as the committee goes along. Comments on decoration, management, renovation, additions, etc., should be practical and of a permanent nature. That is, the building should be largely self-supporting financially once the $20,000 are spent.

5 The groups come together and make their suggestions. A vote is taken, perhaps after discussion, on the best plan. Comments on estimates of costs, practicability of plans, realism of the need, can also be made.

NOTES **This could be used to introduce a local government councillor or politician or mayor or social worker to the group. Such a guest could comment on the way the problem has been tackled, and make suggestions to interest students in local affairs.**

2 ADVERTISING A PLAY

AIM: **This is only possible if the group is studying a play, or performs plays of one sort or another. It is basically a selective criticism of an elementary kind, though can be, of course, very subtle. There are people who work in this area professionally, though that does not make it useful.**

LEVEL: **Designed for secondary drama students.**

1 Assume that the group, or another group, is performing a known play at some future date, a play that the group as a whole knows well.

2 Divide the group into threes or fours. Each group has the task of preparing (for production **en masse**) a playbill.

3 The playbill aims at attracting an audience, at telling people the kind of play it is and what it is

about, at suggesti ıg the setting that the actors will use, and making a feature of an actor or some other aspect of the production.

4 Large pieces of paper and some drawing gear, preferably colours, will eventually be needed. The group divides the work into things like layout, type-setting, writing, design, as they wish. They need to decide what shall be emphasized and how this should be done.

5 At the end of the time, the sketched playbills can be posted for display. Some commercial playbills, or film advertisements, can be put alongside the others for comparison.

NOTES **It will be obvious that such an exercise can be used for a novel under discussion, or a poem, or a film, as well as for other functions that interest the group such as dances, barbecues, and literary readings. It is also surprising how much language work is involved in this kind of exercise; it wastes very little time in fact, and can stimulate a rash of useful material like broadsheets about historical events.**

3 WRITE YOUR OWN OBITUARY

Try to make sure that nobody in the group is dying, or has just died. Don't be too solemn with introductions.

LEVEL: **Designed for senior or adult students.**

1 The group is asked to look sixty or seventy years ahead. (Adult groups select whatever number of years they reasonably might be expected to survive.)

2 Each has the chance now to write his own obituary, a short history of the sort of life each would want **most** to lead, and perhaps the kind of death each might want to die.

3 Explain that details of birth and education, posts held, family, travel, publications, hobbies, societies, and the time, age and manner of death should be included, and should be coolly dealt with, however juicy or scandalous.

4 If for some reason some students are not keen on writing their own obituary, they could construct a hypothetical obituary of somebody else in the group, or somebody else appropriate.

5 Remind them that obituaries are short. A newspaper might cover the obituary of a world figure like John Steinbeck in 240 words only. Remind them that one usually only says nice things in an obituary and that hints of indiscretions are usually very subtle.

6 As a useful contrast, you could ask a few in the group to write a perfectly honest obituary, stating all of the nastiest things about a fictitious person in the plainest possible terms.

NOTES **Read out a few of these after about twenty minutes, assuming the group can write at this speed. If not, they could be made into a file. A photograph could be added — real or just a face from a newspaper or magazine.**

If you know that you will be around long enough to see how these students make use of their lives, it might be amusing, or perhaps rather sad, to see how many lead the kind of life they aim at at this stage. Teachers should not join in this particular exercise; it is too depressing. Better sit in a corner and read *Report from Iron Mountain* or the *Miseducation of American Teachers* or *Erewhon*.

4 PHONEY VOICES

This does require preparation, but is included because of its usefulness. Find somebody in the group with some competence with a tape recorder, or do it yourself if you have time. Record on tape

a couple of minutes each of those automatic telephone services, that are increasingly available: weather, time, sports results, dial-a-prayer, news, shipping and TAB racing services. (Make sure this is not illegal in the place where you live.)

LEVEL: Designed for speech students at various levels.

1 Play the tape (about ten minutes or so) to the whole group without comment, apart from saying what is on the tape and where it comes from.

2 Then play it a second time, asking the group to listen carefully to the variety of voices used for each service, and to write down
   a. the suitability of the voice for the particular telephone service,
   b. any particular characteristics the voices each have,
   c. the good qualities they notice,
   d. the bad qualities they notice,
   e. any odd sounds or pronunciation.

3 Play it through again if time allows. If not, discuss the choice of voices and the particular comments the group has written down.

4 If you have some competent actors, they could try to switch the voices as a test of effectiveness: the voice which tells the time could read the dial-a-prayer material, or the dial-a-prayer voice could be tried giving TAB results, and so on.

NOTES The increased demands on our memories for recording oral information will affect our methods of teaching considerably. Students learn most new information orally; adults learn most new information by telephone or interview. If you want to make the point, ask them to write out from memory, a week later, as much of this taped material as they can remember; you may be surprised how many will get every word right.

5 PRESS CONFERENCE

This takes a few minutes preparation the week before. Apart from that it has endless ramifications, many very useful. Others are fun, but of little use except as fun.

LEVEL: Designed for almost any group of students.

1 Ask a student to prepare a statement or speech to give to the group on the following week. Nobody is to know what the topic is, but the student needs to be perhaps the most able speaker, and also to have opinions about the subject he is discussing; the more controversial and violently argumentative, the better perhaps.

2 Before he gives his talk, explain to the group that each student is a newspaper reporter. Each student has therefore to write down what he can of the speech at what now becomes a press conference. Each is rivalling those of other newspapers to make the best story out of the material delivered. (It is important that the speech be made at ordinary TV speed — fairly slowly, not at radio speed.)

3 After the speech, the Press Secretary (yourself or another student) allows a **few** questions from the Press; these again must be formal and thoughtful; allow no more than five questions perhaps.

4 Each reporter then writes up the report: headline, by-line (if necessary explain what this is), opening paragraph and at least two more paragraphs of the report. (At this stage decide if there is enough time to complete 5 below. If not, give them all the time to write the report.)

5 If time allows, stop them and ask them to write down answers to these questions:
   a. What kind of paper have you chosen to write for?
   b. What did you emphasize and why?

c. What did you leave out and why?
d. Who are your readers? What parts of the community do they represent?
e. Would you 'slant' your story so that the editors and readers hear what they want to hear, or would you try to be fair and impartial?

NOTES **This exercise is almost inexhaustible. You can go on to compare reports, print and publish, have additional press conferences, make this a regular aural comprehension lesson with a variety of victims. You can also use the school movie camera, or a student's, to make a TV interview — with a tape recorder. Be careful; it is tempting to do this too often and it can become a way of life.**

6 WORD CRAZE

This is fun but rather sophisticated in some ways; it works with all kinds of groups, but can fall flat with occasional patterns of students. It is a word creating and popularising game, with quite serious implications.

LEVEL: **Designed for able secondary students.**

1 Present to the group, on a blackboard or modern equivalent, the following words; ask the group to write them down:
tue, lifi, patapa, wifi and **pogol-kate.**

2 Tell the group they are real words from the Yoliapa language, spoken in part of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. (They are.) Ask them to try to guess what they might mean and to write down for each word some kind of guess. Point out they have no way of knowing, but that isn't important: they are all quite common words.

3 Then tell them that rough meanings, in order, are:
today, man, nose, pig and **weak.**
(It is curious that somebody sometimes guesses

what a word means but that may be purely coincidence.)

4 Then ask each student to make up three or four completely new words in English. They must not sound or be spelt the same as any words that really exist. Having made up the words, make up a meaning for each. Write down what part of speech it is, and put each into a sentence illustrating its use.

5 Now ask the students to choose the one they are most proud of and read it out.

6 After all have been heard, take a vote on the best word, and get everybody to write down the word and the meaning. Explain to them that they are to try to popularise the word during the next week on every possible occasion, without giving the game away about the way in which the word was found. They should devise ways of letting as many people hear the word as possible. The aim is to see how far the word can be made to travel, how long it can be made to last, if it can become an in-word and even achieve currency eventually.

NOTES **If no suitable word turns up, suggest they deliberately popularise a real word. The adjective 'fubsy' means 'short and squat', is a real word, and amusing enough as a sound to catch on as suggested above.**

7 LONELY HEARTS

AIM: **This is basically letter writing. Most people read with interest letters sent to panels of experts about problems of all kinds, but teenagers especially like the Dorothy Dix, Dear Abbie kind of advice to the lovelorn. Many of these make curious reading for the adult who after all, has no problem about**

what time he is allowed home or even about what he wears and where he goes.

LEVEL: Designed for adolescent students.

1 Explain to the group that they are going to set up their own Lonely Hearts Bureau.

2 Give them ten minutes in which they each write a letter about a real or imagined problem. (With both girls and boys this could produce giggles and self-consciousness, but if you organize quickly the problem will be overcome. You can mention clothes, food, transport, money as examples of problems, but get them to write **within a minute** of the task being set.)

3 At the end of ten minutes collect letters whether finished or not, shuffle them and give one to each student.

4 They each now have to write a serious and sensible answer to the problems in hand.

5 If the time is running out, collect both letters and save them for another lesson. The follow-up is important. Have some read aloud at random, and discuss in the open group the suitability of the answers—for example, a silly question deserves a frivolous reply.

NOTES Apart from letter writing technique, it raises the question of the number of people prepared to discuss intimate problems with strangers. This is perhaps a sign of a basic need, perhaps insecurity, in the Australian community. It might be wiser, though, to confine further discussion to the sociological implications of the kinds of problems raised in the letters. Groups take this more seriously if you point out that perhaps one million Australians want to know the answer to this particular question; it then becomes a problem of considerable import. The uniquely personal individual problems may be just as interesting in discussion though.

8 ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

It is perhaps unfortunate that St. Valentine's Day occurs very early in the academic year in Australia, and perhaps fortunate that it is only in the last few years that the day has begun to be commercialized in a way that is new, and rather revolting. This exercise is perhaps better dealt with later in any year, unless you have a very able and cooperative group, though the other sort enjoys it.

LEVEL: Designed for middle secondary students.

1 Explain that St. Valentine was a Roman priest and a Christian martyr who died in 270 A.D., but that it is not clear how he became associated with Valentine's Day. Point out that on this day—February 14—young people (and some older ones) in some parts of the world send gifts, love tokens, and, very often, verses to special friends. The number of valentines received was often regarded as a matter of social success and status.

2 Explain that there are two sorts of verses; honestly amorous, and satiric or humorous or even insulting. (It is worth pointing out that the sending of insulting material may be a legal libel so that great care had to be exercised in the choice of verses.)

3 Examples of the honestly amorous verses are:

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Honey is sweet and so are you. (Trad.)
If all the earth were paper white
And all the sea were ink
'Twere not enough for me to write
As my poor heart doth think. (John Lyly)
I dreamed last night of my true love.
All in my arms I held her.
Her pretty yaller hair, like strands of gold,
Lay danglin' round my piller. (Anon)

4 Examples of satiric valentines or verses that can be so used are:

Bright as the day, and as the morning fair,
Such Chloe is—and common as the air.
(Lord George Granville)

I'm Smith of Stoke, aged sixty-odd,
I've lived without a dame
From youth-time on; and would to God
My dad had done the same. (Thomas Hardy)

5 Each member of the group is asked to write one honest Valentine verse and one satiric one, both to be original.

NOTES **Then samples may be read out, or if time does not permit, students take their verses with them and make a suitably decorated card to put them on. These might be suitable for display, or as genuine epistles.**

9 SURVIVAL, NEED AND LUXURY

AIM: **This lesson is really designed to distinguish between the two statements "I want . . ." and "I need . . ."; the difference between "I need a doctor" and "I need a new record". It also gives groups a chance to discuss priorities of a practical kind. The situation given relates pretty closely to the Australian experience, and there are many examples of settlements where such priorities needed to be resolved, both historically and currently.**

LEVEL: **Designed for secondary-adult students.**

1 Divide into small groups of four or five with a chairman and a secretary to report back later.

2 Assume that each small group is being hired by a large organization to establish a township in the Australian desert. It is to be a mining township and

it is planned to employ five hundred people in the mines.

3 The groups are asked to decide **in what order** they will provide services to the people of the town, first so that they will survive, next so that they will have all reasonable needs met, and finally so they will find the township a very attractive place to live in.

4 Point out that water and food will both come first of course, but that things like transport, housing, communications, medical services, fuel, heating and cooling, schools, hotels, entertainment, church facilities, and many other things, will have to be given an order of priority.

5 After discussion, the groups will provide an agreed list of priorities, item by item.

6 The large group should then discuss the priorities of the other groups, giving reasons why their own list differs. If there is still time and the group has tired of the discussion, you could ask each student to sketch a township in plan, numbering priorities as he sees them.

NOTES **Additional discussion could ask what survival implies? Why the aborigines in Australia constructed such complex mythological and religious societies in addition to merely surviving? What is really meant by 'primitive'? Who *ought* to design a town; an architect, a social worker, an engineer, or a combination of these? What was meant by survival of the fittest? Who is fittest to survive? Is a numerical count sufficient as a test of the group fittest to survive? Should we select which people will survive as we select plants and animals?**
The librarian will probably be able to supply some books which deal with towns like Woomera, Mount Isa, Port Hedland, Tarraleah, Ord River and also with ghost towns. The geographic *Arizona Highway* magazine might also include useful information.

10 SNAKES ALIVE

This lesson is perhaps most successful in a group which is predominantly country bred. As an initial stimulus read them a poem such as Douglas Stewart's *Brown Snake*, or Lawrence's *Snake*, or any other poem about snakes which is in an anthology or in your head. Or just tell them a yarn about a snake or read Jack McLaren's description in *My Crowded Solitude*.

LEVEL: **Designed for upper primary to adult students.**

1 Warm the class up with some general discussion about good snake stories, usually of the kind beginning "One day my aunt . . . . . ."

2 When you have all listened politely to three or four yarns, with others finding it hard to restrain themselves from telling their own story, close the discussion.

3 Ask the group **individually** to note down the essential points of the snake story they would want to tell. If anybody does not know a genuine snake story, he will have to create a fictitious one, using what he has already heard as a pattern. Five minutes should be enough for this note-making.

4 Then ask those who have not already spoken to tell their story as briefly as possible.

5 Take a vote on the best story at an appropriate place in the lesson. Discuss why this story is the best. Discuss elements of horror, unexpectedness, the ghoulish relish we all take in other people's misfortunes, humour, happy and sad endings.

NOTES **A possible follow-up, if the lesson is successful, is to collect and edit and illustrate a booklet of snake stories as a class project, or use the yarns**

for a written exercise for the school magazine. With sophisticated classes the origin of fear, the religious or even sexual and Freudian significance of snakes might be discussed, or even Musilinda, King of the Nagas, in the enlightenment of the Buddha.

This lesson may help students to organize material logically, both in oral and written work, and may also help in a small way to prevent the group from turning into crashing social bores who tell interminable stories.

11 TALL YARN

AIM: **The Australian tradition of the tall yarn seems to be falling out of favour as education improves. This is intended to help students to appreciate the irony of the tall yarn and the skill involved.**

LEVEL: **Designed for middle secondary students.**

1 Explain that the origin of the tall yarn in Australia was possibly the local's attempt to counter the English new chum's skiting about his importance, or what he can do, or the size of London, or the good things he says he left behind him. Loneliness, illiteracy, lack of books and lack of time to read, all helped to create a permanent oral tradition of competition which persists in outback pubs and stations.

2 Give examples of professional writers who have followed this old oral tradition, often with great skill. The librarian may have books by Lawson, or Alan Marshall's yarns about the 'Speewah' in *Australia Writes*, or the yarns of 'Billy Borker' or Duke Tritton's *Time Means Tucker*.

3 It may be possible to read examples, or for the group to give examples, but this usually has to be left out because time is short.

4 One formula for the yarn is as follows: (students could make brief notes of this)

a. Begin with an incredible first statement to gain attention. (For example; 'Horrie was not only a long kick, but he could break a verandah post at two hundred yards!' Or, 'Jerry dug post-holes faster than the eye could see').

b. Follow this with the main part of the yarn. This is usually quite logically developed and apparently sensible, with a few amusing asides perhaps. (For example, 'I remember one day when it was pretty hot . . . .' or, 'The dog lived in a special kennel made of steel and fibre-glass' or, 'One night he decided to sleep under a pile of newspapers . . .').

c. To conclude, take your first exaggeration to finish the yarn and make it even more exaggerated, finishing with a flourish quite beyond the wildest imaginings of your audience. If you are really clever, take two such steps, tossing in the final exaggeration apparently as an afterthought.

5 In groups of three or four, each student manufactures a tall yarn and tries it out on the others in the group who suggest improvements and embellishments. These should be original yarns about the biggest, longest, heaviest, hardest, toughest, etc., whatever in Australia; some traditional tall yarns might be modified appropriately.

6 The group then chooses its best yarn and best storyteller, and the groups come together at the end of the time and swap the best yarns.

NOTES **These might be followed by a written exercise simply to show how difficult it is to write something that belongs largely to an oral tradition.**

12 DRAW A HOUSE

AIM: **One aim of this lesson is to encourage students to define and think about what is meant by maturity,**

though the same exercise could also be used to discuss other concepts. It is often surprising what they think maturity is, especially in drawing; you need know nothing about drawing for this exercise. If you need a referee, the art teacher may be useful.

LEVEL: Secondary students and adults.

1. The group can be seated in normal class patterns. Each will need a fairly blank piece of paper, and pencil.
2. Explain to them that they have eight minutes precisely to complete the task you will give them. They are not to ask any questions about the task, or discuss it, or allow themselves to be influenced by what others are doing.
3. The task is simply to draw a house. Do not indicate if it is to be a plan, or a sketch, or anything else about it.
4. At the end of eight minutes re-seat them in groups of four or five. They then are asked to spend a few minutes each explaining the sort of house they have drawn, and why they chose to do it in that way.
5. Now ask them to put the drawings in order of maturity; the 'youngest' drawing at the top, and the 'oldest', most mature drawing, at the bottom. This will take some time and you may need your chairman of the group to make a final decision.
6. Finally, ask them to try to say why they thought the most mature drawing showed maturity and so to define, in words, what maturity is. They should then test their definition in other fields, e.g. clothes, games, hobbies, interests, to see if their definition will stand up under pressure.
7. If time allows, the groups can be called together again and present their definitions and argue about them.

8 Collect the drawings; the most mature selection of each group can be displayed for discussion later. Additional discussion might consider realism and romanticism in the drawings, what each tells about the artist, local and national content, and even if the size of the drawing or how much of the paper is used, is significant.

NOTES **It is interesting, from the teaching point of view, to see if there is any correlation between the maturity of the drawings and the maturity of the same student's written work. If you happen to have an infant school drawing of a house and an architect's sketch to display as well, so much the better. You can follow this up with another lesson of the same kind; ask them to draw a ship or a car and discuss maturity in relation to technological knowledge.**

13 AD-MEN

AIM: **While at first sight this is concerned with writing down to a lowish level, it at least faces students with the problem of communication and the choice of vocabulary. It is important that people who write advertisements have originality, so that stale copies, as well as being legally troublesome, usually are very bad advertisements.**

LEVEL: **Any purchasing age group.**

1 Divide into groups of four. Each group is required to choose a product to advertise: woollen blankets, potato peelers, perhaps a book, though this is rather unlikely on mass media.

2 They are required to write three one-minute advertisements: one for radio, one for television and one for the drive-in cinema screen (or just cinema screen). The same product exactly is to be used for each advertisement and the same material to a large extent.

3 Each ad. must be completely scripted and timed to last exactly 60 seconds. The radio script should be easily read, the T.V. script and cinema scripts should be in audio-video columns. No wildly exaggerated claims should be made. A number of simple facts about the product should be emphasized, and presented making use of the three advertising techniques.

4 If time permits, and it seems worth the organisation, the radio ads. can be taped on a tape recorder, and the others made into short films perhaps at a later date. (To this end a firm might pay for some film providing its products are used for the lesson.)

5 A discussion on advertising techniques could follow instead of 4 and at least the radio ads. can be read out. If time still hangs heavily—which it seldom does with this lesson—an attempt could be made to write advertisements for the next unpopular school function, or for speech day, or for the school tuck-shop or athletics carnival.

NOTES **It is surprising how much the question of the truth in advertising and problems of vocabulary arise very quickly in this lesson. It can easily become two lessons, and if used for film project work, it will run into three.**

14 DENTIST CHATTER

AIM: **This lesson introduces the difficult form of the monologue. It is partly a writing lesson, partly a drama exercise, though it can be completely oral in nature too.**

LEVEL: **Lower and middle secondary.**

1 Set the scene: a dentist's waiting room, dentist's chair, nurse, and gear. The patient in the chair has a mouthful of dentistry machinery and the dentist's big hand too; he can't say a word.

2 The dentist is talkative; he feels he must keep the patient happy and cheerful while he is drilling. He rambles on and on. The patient cannot reply, argue, object or even yell.

3 Divide into pairs. Each pair writes a monologue, the chatter that the dentist keeps up while the patient listens. (It may not be necessary to *write* a monologue; it is often enough simply to prepare orally some subjects dear to dentists' hearts: politics, sport, bird-watching, stamp-collecting, etc.)

4 Each pair then has about five minutes to rehearse the monologue; one plays the patient, the other the dentist. Some attempt at characterisation should be made.

5 The pairs are compared for the humour or banality of the monologue; it is difficult to get through very many in a normal teaching period, but this does not matter.

6 One follow-up or extension worth considering is the problem of a final line to such a monologue. What might the bored and irate patient blurt out as soon as his mouth is freed from obstacles?

'You're standing on my foot!'
'Can't hear a word; I'm deaf.'

NOTES **Incidentally, this is a very rigid form, and very simple. It makes a good early, lively exercise for a group needing to get to know each other.**

15 AND SO TO BED . . . GOODNIGHT, SWEET PRINCE

AIM **This lesson is a writing exercise for individuals and points the need to conclude pieces of writing with some care.**

LEVEL: **Sophisticated upper secondary.**

1 Explain that novelists, playwrights and film scenario writers pay a great deal of attention to the last speech of a novel, play or film. (If necessary, give examples. The final speech of *Hamlet*, the end of Voltaire's *Candide*, Quentin's speech at the end of Arthur Miller's *After the Fall* or the pastor's speech in *One Summer of Happiness.)*

2 Point out that attention is paid to the timing of the speech, the tone, the vocabulary, the deliberation, and the total impact on the reader.
There are at least two ways to tackle this job.

3 A. Assume that a novel studied is to be made into a film, but needs such a final speech. Write it, choosing a suitable ending for the story as a film. Having written the speech, try it out, making any necessary changes. If possible, film and record it.
OR B. Take a simple story. For example, a man returns home after being lost, presumed dead. He finds his wife happily remarried. He is not recognised in his home town any more. He goes off without making himself known. He sits at his campfire and talks to his dog, explaining to himself why he has chosen to go away without revealing who he is. This one can be acted to see how effectively it is written.

NOTES **This lesson may need adaptation, but a teacher who knows a group can easily do this on evidence available from written work.**

16 THINGS THAT GO BUMP DAY AND NIGHT

AIM: **Nearly every group will talk about extra-sensory perception without much encouragement, and most will know some stories about the following area. (For example, there is a woman in Sydney whose thoughts are supposed to intrude into the**

mind of a Melbourne man, even to the stage of waking him up. He has to telephone her to tell her to stop it.) The aim is what is sometimes called a stimulating rap session.

LEVEL: **Upper primary onwards.**

1 Ask for stories and comments on ghosts, water-divining and telepathy, and let the group warm up with discussion or comment of an orderly but informal kind.

2 Divide the group into smaller groups and ask each group to provide written statements about the following two questions.
   a. What seems to be an intelligent scientific attitude to these phenomena? Should one's attitude be the same to all three or are they different in fact?
   b. Suggest an experiment to test the validity of the claims of a water-diviner, a ghost observer and an ESP telepathist. How could such data be tested under laboratory conditions?

3 Report findings and discuss results.

NOTES **If somebody claims he can divine water anywhere, a two-storey building might be a good place to test him out. It is important not to make fun of beliefs that might in fact be of importance to some individuals or religious groups. The group will do this, but a scientific objectivity on the part of the teacher is invaluable to the group, and to the teacher of course.**

17 SEPIK SATIRE

AIM: **This is an introduction to the writing of satire, and provides examples which can be compared with each other and joined together to form a collected group narrative. It also is a useful lead-in to**

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Butler's *Erewhon*, Orwell's *1984*, Huxley's *Island*, or other well known satires.

LEVEL: Sophisticated and literate upper secondary.

1 Explain that the purpose of satire is to ridicule either follies or vices of society. Give students a few minutes to decide what they want to satirise; tell them you hope they will all choose something different. Examples might include: new clothes fashions, length of hair, a singing group, a political leader, or anything currently vicious or foolish. They should each write down one or two things they want to make fun of.

2 Each student is to write one brief chapter — a paragraph or section of 300 words might be more realistic — of a satiric 'novel'. Each will use the same setting and names, so that the bits could be connected into a satiric narrative.

3 The common setting is as follows:

a. The book is set in a village on a remote tributary of the Sepik River in New Guinea.

b. The book is written in the first person, through the eyes of the leader of the expedition; the style is an apparently harmless travel book narrative.

c. The village is the home of the Apulagus. (Actually a Yoliapi word phrase meaning *in the river;* the Yoliapis live in the Lower Om River valley in the West Sepik district. A few real words give a kind of authority to travel narrative.)

d. The members of the expedition are discussing various aspects of the life of the Apulagus village; this means anything in your own society can be made fun of, either by exaggeration of faults or by making the thing satirised ridiculously out of place: (For example, some Australian habits like sporting keenness, drinking habits, Sunday observance, dull parties, and politics and education, even schools, can easily be fitted in.)

4 Remind them not to use real names, or write libellously. The intention is to make people laugh, not to offend them, or not too much.

NOTES **Eventually, these can be polished and put into a folder for further reading or discussion, or rewriting. An ambitious and able class might in fact produce a book without much trouble. A follow-up lesson could be held to write another chapter each at a later date — a few weeks at the most.**

18 CHOOSE A POEM, ANY POEM

AIM: **This seems ridiculously simple, so simple that nobody much thinks it worth doing. They may be right, but find out for yourself. Its aim is to treat poetry as if it is nothing particularly special.**

LEVEL: **Almost any level that can read.**

1 Use a poetry anthology, or get them to bring one. In a normal school group there will usually be one or two anthologies in common.
2 Ask each student to choose a dozen or so lines to read. He does *not* have to say why he chooses them. He does *not* have to discuss them.
3 In pairs, students practise reading aloud to each other, for about ten minutes.
4 The students simply read the lines they have chosen. Choose the first student and after he has read he can nominate the second, and so on.
5 When the time has all gone, simply stop.

NOTES **Of course there are syllabuses to get through and all that but a gardener who never sits in the garden and a cook who never eats are pretty useless people. You can, of course, learn a lot about the group and the individuals from the verse they choose. You can ask them on a later occasion to bring something along to read. But just for this one, let them choose a poem — any poem.**

19 HERE LIES . . .

AIM: **It is probably true to say that sad, funny, or sick or cynical epitaphs were mainly a phenomenon of the last century when death was regarded more solemnly and therefore more an object of satire. However, as an introduction to the idea of writing verse it works well with some groups, but not necessarily all.**

LEVEL: **Middle school secondary — and middle class.**

1 Give some examples of funny epitaphs; the group will know some. If you are desperate the following is one example:

> Here lie remains of William Ashe,
> Whose house burnt up like tinder,
> No longer William, merely Ashe,
> He lies, unmeaning cinder.

2 Give them a choice of epitaphs to write. For example, the epitaph of Colleen Scully who got her head stuck in a dishwashing machine, of Lily McNinney who blew herself to extinction on the bagpipes, or Blackie Swan, who tried to get down an UP escalator.

3 Ask the group to write two or three, choose the best, and then read them out.

NOTES **This kind of verbal callisthenics has many critics. It is a sophisticated form of verbal fun, perhaps precious and old-fashioned, but quite workable. If there is a sensitivity to such a subject, try some DOG EPITAPHS, though I expect that some groups sensitive to the death of people, will be even more sensitive over the death of a dog. (Rupert Brooke's *Little Dog's Day* might be a good poem to read to set the tone of both language and doggy epitaph.)**

20 WORD GAMES

AIM: **This is perhaps difficult with some groups, but might be modified for slower, uncreative children or dull adults by making the subject a game that does not depend on words — like dice games. The aim is to provide a difficult exercise in group communication.**

LEVEL: **Maiure secondary or adults.**

1 Talk for a few minutes about word games: cross-word puzzles, Scrabble, etc.

2 Point out that such games have materials with which to play them and a set of rules by which they are played.

3 Divide into groups of four as this is a convenient number. Ask each group to invent a game that has to do with words, or vocabulary, or using a dictionary, or word-building, or a game which practises word choice, or spelling, or making a quick oral answer. It can be an *oral* game if they wish.

4 Within 30 minutes they must produce:
   a. a title
   b. the rules of play
   c. the necessary gear to play it
   d. a willingness to play the game and explain how it works and what use it is.

5 By wandering about between groups it may be possible to choose the best game. Occasionally games worth playing turn up.

NOTES **If this comes off, the students will have achieved a great deal indeed. To agree about rules, to start with, is a very sophisticated exercise in persuasion and ability to get on with other people. If they do construct an oral game, try to get a copy of the rules and use it at a later date as a follow-up.**

21 AN UNSEEN PLAY

AIM: **This lesson does require a little organisation. Minimally you need enough copies of a play the students do not know to allow a scene to be read. Much better is part of a recorded play, part of a radio or television play or part of a play recorded on a tape recorder by another English group. It is a kind of practical criticism, so the choice of play is important. For mature students *Waiting for Godot, Billy Budd, The Queen and the Rebels, The Caretaker* are all useful and difficult.**

LEVEL: **Secondary.**

1 Play one selected scene, or act one selected scene, to the group. The scene should last about six minutes.

2 Play it a second time. Students may make notes on what they hear or see.

3 Ask them, either as groups or individuals, to attempt the following tasks:
   a. summarize what they heard,
   b. suggest the kind of play the scene came from, what might have preceded it and what might have followed,
   c. state what is learnt about the characters who appear,
   d. suggest an appropriate set for what they heard or saw,
   e. make any other comments about the play, assuming they are going to produce it.

4 Re-play the scene, after discussion or written answers or without either of these. Give any information you have that will help them to make more of the scene on this last reading.

NOTES **It is possible simply to ask each group to design an appropriate set for what they heard; the assumption here is that if one can do this, the play must be clearly understood, though we all see**

plays where this doesn't happen. It is also possible to use dialogue out of a novel, for example part of Turgenev's *A Lear of the Steppes*. *Omar Khayyam* or part of Joyce's *Ulysses* are also useful stimuli, but most things will work once the students see that there are practical uses in oral comprehension.

22 'DISGUSTED OF ADELAIDE'

AIM: **Many people have trouble writing formal or semi-formal letters, even if they are strongly motivated. This lesson is intended to give practice in writing letters which could easily be required in a real situation by students, sooner or later.**

LEVEL: **Any letter writing age.**

1 Tell the group that they are to regard themselves as householders and that they have a new home of which they are inordinately proud. Each week the local rubbish collector comes and leaves a trail of devastation in the street: litter; lost, bent and battered lids and tins; roise; unnecessary smell and general nuisance.

2 Divide the group into small groups of three or four.

3 Some groups are to prepare an angry letter from an angry ratepayer to the local council.
Other groups prepare a letter slightly different in tone for the daily newspaper.
The third group writes colloquial letters, on the same subject, to friends or relatives.
If useful, a fourth group could assume the character of one particular kind of ratepayer (a clergyman, or an aggressive shop-owner, or a migrant housewife) and write to the council in the way such a character might write.

4 Allow ten or fifteen minutes.

5 At the end of the time, a spokesman from each group reads the letter. Discussion follows on whether the letters are effective in the context.

NOTES **This lesson should help students to learn to set out a letter properly, how to sign it, and how to adopt varying tones without using the voice. It might also prompt an interest in civic affairs or any current, burning issue. You might even get a real councillor along to discuss your complaints.**

23 STUDYING THE NOVEL THROUGH POETRY

AIM: **The aim of this lesson or series of lessons is to direct attention to some of the major themes or areas of interest in a novel which has been read by the whole class. Organisation is on a small group basis and resource material is simply one pre-selected poem for each group (duplicated or in small sets of class anthologies). If successful, this lesson could lead to two or three weeks of further investigation of the novel arising out of group findings.**
The example below takes *Lord of the Flies* as the novel to be studied. Any similar novel can be treated in this way. Shakespearian plays also lend themselves to this treatment.

LEVEL: **This can be attempted at any level of the secondary school, but seems to work best at third year or beyond.**

1 From poetry resources available to the class, select six poems which seem to raise issues or treat themes bearing comparison with certain aspects of a novel currently being studied (e.g. *Lord of the Flies).* Poems not in class anthologies can be duplicated.

2 Divide students into groups of five or six.

3 After careful reading in anthologies available, choose poems which treat themes developed in the novel. For example:

a. 'Eli, Eli lama Sabacthani', W. R. Rodgers, from *Theme and Variations*, R. B. Heath, Longmans. (This is a poem about the crucifixion of Christ, which can lead to discussion of the themes of barbarity, sacrifice, sin and guilt in the novel. Parallels with the killing of Simon may suggest themselves).

b. 'My Parents Kept Me From Children Who Were Rough', Stephen Spender, in many anthologies. (This can set the group on a discussion of Piggy and the sadistic tendencies of young children).

c. 'Spring and Fall: To a Young Child', Gerard Manley Hopkins, in many anthologies. (The themes of innocence and experience in this poem are echoed in the novel. Ralph's crying at the end of the novel might be recalled).

d. 'Me and the Animals', David Holbrook, from *Breakthrough,* R. B. Heath, Hamish Hamilton. (This poem considers the animal in all of us, particularly our primitive instinct of fear).

e. 'Little Johnny's Confession', Brian Patten, from *Breakthrough,* R. B. Heath, Hamish Hamilton. (This grim, semi-humorous piece contrasts the innocence of children with the viciousness they inherit from adults).

f. 'Picture of Childhood', Yevgeny Yevtushenko, from *The City of Yes and the City of No,* Sun Books. (This horrifying description of gang brutality will arouse intense discussion of mass hysteria and the behaviour of Jack's tribe in the novel).

Give one of these poems to each group, asking students to read and discuss the poem first and then suggest that they try to see connections with certain aspects of the novel. A group reporter should take notes of the discussion.

4 After say, 20 minutes, begin a whole class session where group reports are shared. It is best if you have a double lesson (about 1¼ hours) for this study.

5 Quite often argument, comparison and interesting overlap will occur. So many stimulating issues may have been raised that groups may wish, in the next few weeks, to prepare a mini-thesis on an area of interest which has been discovered in this discussion session.

NOTES **It is suggested that a sequence similar to the one described above is most successful when there has been little previous teaching or discussion of the novel.**
The teacher can gauge from the depth and detail of the student's discussion how well the novel has been understood on first reading. If there has been little previous discussion, group members will be more excited and impressed by their ability to discover the meaning of a novel by themselves. Consequently, discussion will be more spontaneous and untrammelled by any preconceptions about what might be the 'right things' to say.

24 CLASSIFIED ADS

AIM: **This is an account of a lesson that began without a clear-cut aim. The teacher hoped that it would lead to further activity but, as it happened, it was not taken further than a single lesson.**

LEVEL: **Junior secondary.**

1 At the beginning of the first lesson on Tuesday I walked into 21A classroom carrying the lid of a chalk box. After a brief 'Good Morning', to which there were one or two mumbled replies, I asked Louis to come to the front. Immediately the atmosphere changed; faces looked up from diaries,

hands poised over copied Maths homework. Louis, after a startled 'Who, me?' extricated himself from his desk and chair and shambled with evident pleasure to the front of the class. I asked him to choose from the box a slip of paper. He drew out a 'classified' advertisement which had appeared in the Miscellaneous column of the morning's *Advertiser*. I asked him to read it to the class. He stumbled over the first word and so I gave him the opportunity of reading it first to himself. Then he read aloud:

'REFINED and very well established single lady with no ties. Non smoker, non drinker. Fond of arts, good books, home life, travel, music and business life. Wishes to meet refined, kind, sincere, reliable, single, healthy gentleman in good position, 43-50 years. Must speak good English or Greek, with good personality. Good education, reserved type.

Also must be a believer and not an Atheist.

Child no objection.

Write F212, Advertiser'.

The boys were puzzled but interested. 'What do we know about her?' I asked. The replies came slowly at first. It was a woman. She was lonely. She had probably been married to a millionaire. Some argument ensued over what 'single' meant. I reread the advertisement and we talked about her interests, her age, her nationality. Arguments broke out as to whether she was newly arrived in Australia or whether she had a good job and a home of her own. Gradually, the boys warmed to the activity. The woman emerged as a snob. ('She would go to the opera'). She appeared as narrow-minded, fastidious and respectable. Talk centred on the kind of job she might have, whether she had a cat or not and how she got on with her neighbours.

2 Then I posed what I told the boys was a very difficult question. 'Imagine that someone answered the advertisement and proved to be satisfactory.

Suppose that the two were compatible and decided to get married. What sort of person would he be and what sort of married life would they lead?' Boys leapt to life:

'He'd be a little man with glasses.'

'He'd be a snob — snob takes to snob.'

'She'd make him go to church with her.'

'He'd have to be a saint!'

'They'd go on picnics together.'

'He wouldn't be able to tell dirty jokes.'

We decided, after consultation with the Greek boys in the class (derisive hoots of 'Zorba!' from all sides), that we would call her Miss Spiros and him Mr X. I suggested that it would be good fun for the boys to write a detailed description of either Miss Spiros or Mr X or write a short story about their life together.

3 Since they weren't in the mood for settling down and writing I played my second card. They divided into six groups of five by turning their chairs about. I went to each group and allowed one person from each to choose another advertisement from the box. An anguished cry went up. 'This is from the "Lost and Found" column!' After appropriate soothing words, I explained that I wanted them to present ideas about the person who had submitted their advertisement.

One advertisement was passed round and read by each member of the group. The group was puzzled. Their advertisement read:

Ride needed to Queensland.

Please phone Bill 710988.

After learning that they weren't meant to deduce personality from such limited information they were greatly relieved. 'You mean we can make it up ourselves?'

One group with an advertisement from *The Review* were delighted. It read:

University dropout dying of hunger. Loss of weight compensated by growth of hair. Must have work or sell hair. Review box 147.

The boy recording ideas for this group took over. He decided that the young man lived in a garage at the back of a house. The outside was painted in psychedelic colours. Inside there was a 'dirty big filing cabinet' containing his life subscription to *Playboy*.

Another group took quite seriously their advertisement:

GENT mid 30's never married. Home, car, seeks sincere lady View Mat. F117. Advertiser.

We heard progress reports from three of the groups when the bell went for the end of the lesson. I asked that each student write at home about the person they had discussed.

25 RECOGNISING A SPEAKER'S TONE — PART ONE

AIM: **The following group of lessons arose, surprisingly enough, because a group of first-year boys were disappointed with the tape recording they had made of two plays. They were puzzled by the fact that their voices failed to convey the humour that they felt in the lines.**

LEVEL: **Junior and middle secondary students.**

1 My reaction was to write on the blackboard a list of words in bold capitals

INDIGNANT	OPTIMISTIC	APOLOGETIC
PLEADING	IMPATIENT	RELIEVED
SULKY	DOUBTFUL	DEMANDING
TAUNTING		

These were all tones of voice inherent in the two plays they had recorded.

2 We discussed briefly what each of the words meant (TAUNTING was difficult, but once understood, was well understood) and general definitions suggested were added in brackets next to the actual words.

3 Time allowed a few impromptu efforts — 'Freddie' sulked magnificently and 'Johnnie' was doubtfully doubtful.

4 I then played a tape I had made (with the help of my wife and primary school son) of the following short pieces of speech:
Come on! Hand it over!
I'm sure everything will be all right!
Please let me come.
Who do you think you are?
Yah! Yah! You can't catch me! (my son's favourite)
We . . . e . . . ell . . . I don't know that I ought to.
Come on! Aren't you ready yet?
Gee! I'm glad you made it!
I'm not going to play! Give me my ball back!
I'm sorry I did it!
I suggested that each of the short speeches the boys had heard could fit into the tones of voice I had blackboarded.

5 The second playing of the tape set them their task. Next to the blackboard words they had copied they had to write what they thought were the taped speeches appropriate to that tone.

NOTES **Homework exercise was simple: Write out and prepare for taping two speeches:**
a. showing anger
b. showing surprise

26 RECOGNISING A SPEAKER'S TONE — PART TWO

NEXT DAY **A quick recapitulation of the previous period led to three or four 'performances' of anger and surprise and a couple of very successful mimes (generally accepted because footy practice had cut short thespian activity).**

1 This led fairly painlessly into group work (prefect asking boy for non-existent lunch-pass; school

bully threatening shy boy; two boys discussing last Saturday's loss by two points; etc).

2 Carozzi's *Patchwork* also proved useful — the 'big girl' episode excited both interest and indignation.

27 RECOGNISING A SPEAKER'S TONE — PART THREE

NEXT DAY I played them a tape of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* with Oliver asking for more gruel, and set each group the task of presenting the scene with appropriate dialogue, with some very interesting results, including an Alf Garnett-type urchin protesting about 'canned muck'!
The final test was a retape in the Resources Centre of the original plays. The general opinion was that it was much improved.

28 FROM DISCUSSION TO POEMS

AIM: **In a lesson of this kind students come to poems as further illumination of ideas they have discussed.**

LEVEL: **Senior secondary.**

1 Present a provocative or controversial statement such as
'If I were blind, I could not see the colour of your skin, so why should I judge men and women on this basis?'

2 Give students the opportunity to critically examine the statement in group discussion.

3 Perhaps also allow the class to discuss the points raised in each group.

4 Ask students to read individually D. J. Enright's 'Spotted Deer' (*Mainly Modern*, p. 13) and have

them decide what comment the writer is making. They may write a statement of which they think he might approve.

5 Another statement might be
'Television seems to bring the world closer but, in fact, it is still 'out there' while we sit safe and comfortable inside'.

6 Allow discussion and then direct attention to the 'Political and Social Comment' section of *Mainly Modern*. Ask the students to find a poem which says something similar. Ask them to write their own explanation of the comment that the poet is making and invite their comments.

29 SHUFFLE A STORY

AIM: **For this lesson the teacher will need to get from the librarian four blank cataloguing cards for each student in the class. It is best to make the lesson something of a mystery, for this makes the final activity all the more delightful.**

LEVEL: **Upper primary or junior secondary, but it may be a useful lesson for older students who are reluctant to write.**

1 Hand a card to each student and explain that you want one word neatly printed on the card. The word will have to suggest an emotion, a theme or an atmosphere. You might suggest jealousy, despair, hatred, fear, danger, etc.

2 Pick up the cards, reading out the words as you do. Then hand out a second card to each student and explain that the next task is one requiring greater care. On the card will be written a description of a place — one bristling with atmosphere. Some time can be spent discussing the use of effective details.

3 Take up the 'place' cards and again hand out blank cards. These are to be 'male character' cards. Each student will present a male character, described in such detail that a personality begins to emerge.

4 The final card will be used for a female character. Once again the teacher might suggest that attention to detail will help bring the character to life.

5 You now have theme cards, place cards and two character cards. Have students shuffle each pack of cards and deal out one of each to each student. The result can be hilarious — a wrinkled ninety-year-old man and a fat baby girl — the scene a cemetery at night and the theme — desire.

NOTES **The cards can, of course, be reshuffled and new combinations tried. Once the students are aware of the possibilities they are likely to write more interesting descriptions of places and people. They may also be asked to use the four cards they have to write a story. It is sometimes wise to let students swap cards so that they can get a particular theme, place or character.**

30 NEWS BULLETINS

The tape recorder is a useful aid for encouraging primary and junior secondary students to read, write and speak. The teacher will arrange that a taped news bulletin be 'broadcast' to the class each lesson. Students will take it in turn to consult a daily newspaper and choose an item of news. The student will rewrite the news item in his own words. It is a good idea to insist that the writing be on alternate lines and that each new sentence is begun on a new line. The writing can now easily be read by the newsreader and incidental practice in writing in sentences is given. Students should be encouraged to re-record their

readings until they are quite satisfied with them. The teacher may assist so that words are clearly enunciated.

NOTES **A variation is to have groups of students responsible for certain areas of news — e.g. cricket, disasters, the space programme, and the war in Indo-China. The research and reading is a group responsibility and members of the group take it in turn to read the news items that go to make up a five or ten minute 'Space Programme Report'. These may be presented once a week.**

31 BOOK DISPLAY FOR RELUCTANT READERS

AIM: **Many junior secondary students have not had the opportunity to handle attractive books that are designed to appeal to adolescents and yet are easily read by those whose reading age is well below their chronological age.**

1 Contact a bookseller who carries a good stock of children's books, particularly those paperback series designed for less able readers. Ask for a box of about 100 books including Oxford Paperbacks, Trend, Topliner, Chequered Flag Series, Puffins, Baumar Books, etc. Have a range of difficulty and take into account the fact that girls may have different interests from boys.

2 Explain to the students that they will have the opportunity of giving their honest opinion of different kinds of books. Have prepared sheets with spaces for students to fill in (a) the author, (b) the title, (c) series or publisher, (d) comments on the book, (e) star ratings — five stars (wonderful) to no stars (dreadful).

3 Remove the chairs from the room, spread the desks around the edges of the room and lay out all the books so that attractive covers can be seen.

4 Explain that the idea is for each student to make a quick appraisal of at least three books. They might make comment on what attracts them — the cover, the print size, illustrations or the subject matter.

5 Allow the students to browse, rejecting any books which do not appeal to them. Move about helping any who cannot find something of interest.

NOTES **This is an excellent way to arouse interest in starting a paperback class library. Books eventually bought will include popular titles and extra books specially chosen by the teacher.**

32 USING THE SENSES

AIM: **The activities arranged in these lessons are designed to increase children's perception of the world around them. The exploration of sensory perception leads on to creative activity and hopefully to a sensitive response to writing of a particular kind.**

LEVEL: **Junior secondary.**

1 Write on the board 'The five-barred prison of the flesh', and ask the students what the writer meant when he wrote these words. Discussion should lead to a listing of the main ways in which we perceive.

2 Ask the students to close their eyes, lie on the desk, and make a mental list of the sounds they hear. Ask them to find words to suggest the quality of the sounds.

3 Ask them to sniff. Are there any smells that they notice? Ask them to think of smells that they actually remember. What smells have they really been aware of in the city, in the country, at school, in a hospital, in a church, etc?

4 Ask them to close their eyes and feel their skin, their clothing, their desks, their bags, etc. Ask them to suggest unusual things they have felt. Have them close their eyes and then pass round a series of objects for them to feel. Get them to find words for the sensations they experience.

5 Talk about taste sensations and explain how the tongue has three main taste areas and can register sweetness, sourness and saltiness. Try a brief experiment with a sweet, a grain or two of salt, vinegar, etc., placed on various parts of the tongue. Let the students suggest their favourite tastes.

6 Discuss the many facets of visual experience — colour, shape, shine, texture, perspective, contrast, shadow, etc. Ask the students to look out the window at one small area. What can they say about what they see? If students are already in groups it may be useful for the whole group to concentrate on the same area and to compare notes on what they see.

7 Broaden the students' conception of senses by describing an experiment. 'Imagine you are completely blindfolded; your ears are plugged; your nose is blocked; you are dressed in a spaceman's suit with a cushion of air between your skin and your clothing so that no touch is registered. Now imagine that you are made to walk (a) along a bitumen road, (b) on a thick, soft lawn, (c) across a boggy paddock. How will you know where you are? Imagine yourself in the same condition walking upstairs, going down in a lift or walking off a two-foot high step.
Extend the discussion to a consideration of how we are aware of temperature change. Consider internal sensory impressions — nausea, pain, the thumping of the heart.

8 The students can now prepare to write out a brief fieldwork programme. Dictate the following

instructions to them:

a. look up
b. look down and examine one square inch of the ground
c. close your eyes and listen
d. smell
e. think about wind, sun, dryness/humidity, heat/cold, clothing. What do you feel?
f. turn around and look at something at eye level.

9 With pads and pencils ready students should now be sent outside in small groups to carry out instructions. They should be asked to record as much as possible of the sensations they experience. Strictly limit the time to five minutes.

10 When the students are back in the classroom, give them time to write up their rough notes.

11 At this point the lesson can take a number of directions. The students may be sufficiently excited to want to write down in prose or verse their experiences outside. You may suggest a heading, 'Winter Morning', etc., and invite them to provide their own.

12 An alternative is to read to them a piece of writing such as that at the beginning of the second chapter of H. E. Bates' 'Fair Stood the Wind for France'. In this passage a bomber pilot gradually comes to consciousness amid what he slowly realises is the wreckage of his aircraft. Sense impressions gradually come to him — the sound of wind in grass, the smell of aviation fuel, a pain in his back, the taste of vomit in his mouth and the pulsing and wetness of a wound. As his eyes gradually focus he becomes aware of his plight.

13 It is worthwhile having the students pick out the sense impressions when you have finished reading.

14 Finally, invite them to imagine themselves in a particular situation, unconscious or asleep. Ask them to describe the regaining of consciousness

in the way that Bates does. Suggest that the writing will be more real if they can include details of sense impressions.

NOTES **For the final writing assignment it may be necessary to provide suggestions. Point out that in the past students have imagined themselves in motorbike accidents, waking up with the teacher standing over them, or waking up in haunted houses, damp caves, etc.**

33 PUBLIC SPEAKING

AIM: This lesson consists of the initial stages of a term-long programme to develop confidence and ease in addressing audiences.

LEVEL: Primary or secondary.

1 It is easy to demonstrate to the class that each of us has irrational nervous mannerisms when we are asked to stand up and speak before an audience, even an audience of fellow students. Choose someone who you know will be able to bear the laughter of the others and ask him to come to the front of the class to talk on a difficult topic. Most boys in my experience have trouble in moving from their chairs. Almost invariably they make unnecessary adjustments to their clothing — pulling sweaters down, doing up buttons, etc. Girls tend to fuss with their hair.

2 Show the class how, once in front of an audience, many people perform ludicrous balancing acts; faces are scratched; hair is pushed back and buttons are undone and done up.

3 Explain that you will ask each student in turn to
   a. leave his desk quietly
   b. walk to the front of the class without making any clothing adjustments

c. face the class and look at them
d. pause before speaking
e. address the chairman and the class saying 'Today is the . . . of May'.

NOTES **The lesson sounds simple and trivial, yet it is worthwhile as many students, particularly boys, are very clumsy and ill-at-ease. Some students may have to get out of their desks two or three times. They may continue to adjust dress or balance on one foot but the laughter of the class, provided that it is not unkind, quickly brings home to the student the need for making a conscious effort to discipline movement. The hardest part is to get the students to pause before speaking — such is their desire to get the ordeal over quickly.**

34 SOUND EFFECTS

AIM: **This is primarily a vocabulary expansion lesson but can lead to discussion and writing.**

LEVEL: **Primary and Junior Secondary.**

1 Transfer selected sounds from a sound-effects record (there are many readily available) to a tape. Natural sounds are probably more useful for this exercise than the sounds of cars, trains, breaking glass, etc.

2 Ask students to close their eyes while the first sound is played. It may well be thirty seconds of wind and rain or a storm at sea or seagulls and the crashing of waves on the shore.

3 Have the students as a class suggest the scene that they imagined. Ask for the different sounds that they heard and blackboard the words that they find to express these sounds. Encourage discussion of the way in which words convey slight differences in sound.

4 The second sound is used for a wider purpose. Ask the students to visualise as well as listen. When the sound is finished, ask the students to jot down in note form the details of sounds they heard and sights they imagined.

5 Individual writing in prose or verse may follow but some students may wish to use the sound as the opening of a radio play or a short story reading. Eerie sounds of wind and rain often suggest horror and mystery stories. A haunted house is a favourite setting for a story or play.

35 POETRY PROGRAMMES

AIM: In this approach to poetry, students choose poems that they like, find out relevant biographical facts and explain difficulties in the poems with little reference to the teacher. It is most valuable when beginning a new section of work — perhaps a section on Australian poetry, the poetry of World War I, modern poetry or poetry associated with a particular theme.

LEVEL: Senior secondary, but the material produced will be useful for introducing poems to younger and less enthusiastic students.

1 Explain to the students that the aim is to produce a tape-recorded programme of poetry readings with comments that will give to the lower form students an understanding and appreciation of the poems.

2 The programme might begin with a short introductory statement about the period or the tradition from which the poems emerged. Depending on the topic, some comment may be made on the prevailing political climate or on social conditions. Students will need to read widely but should be encouraged to reduce their research to clear,

concise statements which will be understood by their listeners.

3 Brief comments on the poet may be made before each poem is read. The emphasis should be on items that will catch the interest of the listeners. It is not an academic paper.

4 The reading of the poem should itself be an act of interpretation. Students will need to discuss the ways in which certain lines may be read. The teacher's help may be sought in resolving difficulties.

5 Perhaps after each reading brief comments may be made about the poem. 'You will have noticed that the poem began . . .', 'The idea introduced in the second stanza is taken up again at the end of the poem . . .' Difficult passages may be elucidated so that before the second reading the listener will have a clear idea of the poet's purpose and the way in which the poem develops.

6 The number of poems read should be limited so that the programme of comments and reading runs for little more than thirty minutes.

NOTES **The activity is obviously worthwhile for its own sake. It is probably best run as a group activity with four or five groups preparing different programmes. Hours of reading, writing, editing and careful rehearsal will be necessary before the final polished programme. The tapes can then be used with junior classes who are usually impressed when they find that older students are interested in and enthusiastic about poetry.**

36 THE SOUND OF CHAUCER

AIM: **This lesson attempts to bring secondary students studying Chaucer to a finer appreciation of the sound of his poetry. The teacher will need to have a recording of *The Canterbury Tales* read in**

Middle English. There are at least two versions readily available.

1 Copy the record or parts of it onto a sound tape.

2 Play a section of the tape, pointing out the ways in which the sounds of Chaucer's English differ from those of modern English. Stop the tape and play back so that students can hear particular sounds a number of times. Invite them to imitate words and phrases on the tape.

3 After the students have listened to the whole of the 'Prologue' ask them to choose a passage of about half a dozen lines, one which they enjoyed hearing.

4 Now announce that within a week you will expect each student to listen to the recorded version of his six lines enough times for him to be able to give a 'perfect' reading of the passage. They will need to pay attention to rhythm and pitch as well as vowels and consonants.

5 Many students will be eager to learn their passages. Encourage them to do so.

6 At the end of the week have a session for hearing students recite or read aloud. The language teacher or someone else trained in phonetics might comment on the readings.

NOTES **Students should have a good deal of fun mastering the unusual vowel sounds and pronouncing initial consonants which modern English has dropped. If the passage is well learned it could be something that stays with them for years.**
Chaucer's England: **Students studying *The Canterbury Tales* will be delighted by the beautiful colour film *Chaucer's England.* Its chief virtue is the superb dramatic treatment of 'The Pardoner's Tale'. Unfortunately Coghill's 'translation' is used but the film is still worthwhile. The British Council (Sydney) has a print. Avoid black and white prints**

(the S.A. Audio-Visual Education Centre has one) and do not be satisfied with television presentation.

Another fascinating film treatment of 'The Pardoner's Tale' is *Dance of Death* (available from the British Council in Sydney). The story is mimed by University of Malawi students in modern dress. The quality of the film and the uniqueness of the treatment may stimulate students to attempt their own dramatisation or film-making.

37 PICTURE INTO WORDS

For the past two years, I have been using occasional pictures and other forms of non-verbal stimulus in the writers' workshop as a change from more verbal forms of approach. Any teacher can make a selection of photos that will help motivate writing. It is worth trying. If you do, there are certain points worth considering.

LEVEL: **Primary and junior secondary.**

If pictures are to serve as a springboard for children to write, it is not enough simply to push the children off the board and watch them sink or swim. Ideally, the children should be in relatively small, sociable groups, each group discussing a photo, with the teacher moving from group to group, assessing when interest is caught sufficiently for individual writing to begin. Try not to let discussion shape the story too firmly; there should be room for individual variation in the written development of theme.

It is a good idea for children whose expression is often inhibited by fear of 'bad' spelling or 'bad' writing to work in a 'burst', trying to write the story almost as they would tell it. It helps to have a period of silent concentration before the 'burst' when children might conceive their own story ideas.

The audience, whether of teacher or child, should reinforce the joy in creation. It is up to the teacher to structure the audience situation through exchange and reading of work, through wise use of display and through constructive interest — a quiet word at the right time is usually more effective than a later, written comment. Help the child display or share his or her work, not only through display boards, but by use of the small social grouping as an audience. Children like to read each other's work, perhaps on a simple exchange basis. Make time for this.

These pictures open up potent themes for children, however they are not a writing programme in themselves, but an aid to children and to the teacher, leading towards that ideal situation where the children feel free to write as the urges takes them. To that end, you might consider having a writing-corner in your classroom — as important as the library-corner where any child who wants can write, no matter when or what. If the child wishes to show what is written, so much the better. But be wary of the child who writes only to please you or others.

These photos tend to move the teacher into his proper place — the background — where he may shape the learning situation or tidy up the edges, but where he or she should not substitute apparent teaching for real learning. Learning is a by-product of the child's relationship with his environment.

38 WOMEN'S LIB

AIM: **The letter below may be used to initiate a consideration of past and present attitudes to courtship and marriage or may simply be used as a stimulus to an interesting writing exercise.**

LEVEL: **Secondary girls.**

Let each girl have a copy of the letter. After discussion ask them to imagine themselves in the position of Elizabeth and write a reply, firstly in 'olde English' and then in modern or 'mod' English.

Mistress Elizabeth,

I have long been an earnest suitor of your honour, that I might be admitted an humble suitor to your sweet selfe. Your dearest parents are most ready to part with a great part of their estate for your sake, and I am thought worthy of a good wife.

Husbands are such rare comodities in this age that I can woo and win wives by the dozens. I know not any gentlewoman in these parts, but would kiss a letter from my hands, read it with joye, and then lay it up next her heart as a treasure, but I will not try their courtesies, except I find you discourteous.

My last request is this. Take a turn in private, then read this letter againe, and imagine the penman at your elbow. Next lay your hand on your heart, and resolve to say Amen to my desires. If so, I shall accept your portion with the left hand, but your lovely person with the right.

2 March, 1650 *THOMAS BOURMAN*

39 LANGUAGE MATERIALS

AIM: **This lesson has a dual purpose. It provides useful practice in spelling for the students and at the same time builds up a stock of materials to be used by migrant children and children with reading problems.**

LEVEL: **Primary and Junior secondary.**

Explain to the class (perhaps at the end of term or on occasions when enthusiasm is low) that you want assistance in preparing materials for other students. Have ready pieces of stiff paper of about

quarto size. 'Texta colours' and coloured pencils may be used. Insist that care is taken with layout and printing.

One game may be 'cracking the code'. On one side of the paper the letters of the alphabet are printed with the corresponding numbers from one to twenty-six. On the other side a difficult word is written in number code e.g. 18 5 19 15 21 18 3 5 19.

A second set of cards may consist of words which the students have had difficulty in spelling. Students may keep a record of spelling errors and then make flash cards during the session for making materials.

Cards may also be prepared for dictionary exercises. A simple card will consist of five words beginning with the same letter but jumbled so that they are not in alphabetical order. A second card will have a similar list but with words beginning with the same letter. This can proceed to the complexity of STRATEGY, STRAY, STRANGLE, STRAP, STRAIN. Some students may need to use dictionaries to make the cards. Later these will have to be put in alphabetical order.

Another game (adapted from an exercise in *Reading Aids Through the Grades)* involves finding words when the endings and synonyms on dictionary meanings are given. On one side students preparing the card write common suffixes.

1.	IOUS	3.	IAL	5.	ANCE
2.	IVE	4.	ENCE	6.	TION

On the other side may be written

1. keen on study. 2. making destruction.
3. having influence. 4. a place to reside.
5. something that hinders. 6. a sudden change.

Students to whom the cards are given will be expected to write in what precedes the suffix.

40 CREATIVE WRITING

LEVEL: **Primary or Junior secondary.**
The topic for creative writing is to be 'When I was Young'. The actual writing of this essay is to be preceded by stimulus of two sorts. Firstly, the students have a creative movement lesson which is in two stages.

STAGE 1 THEME — 'Birth to Age Three'
MUSIC — 'Gymnopede'
FORMAT — The teacher suggests that the students are to evolve from birth up to approximately the age of three. For example:—

a Discovering physical features — eyes, hands, fingers, arms, head, body, legs, toes. Become aware of space and movement. Slowly take your first steps — at first these are uncertain, but gradually they become more definite.

b Become aware of your needs and express these: hunger and thirst.
Become aware of your emotions. Show contentment, happiness and pain.

c Become aware of the presence of your mother.

d Examine your clothes — bootees, cap, jacket, etc. Play with your toys.

e Develop your movements — crawling, walking, jumping, hopping and skipping.

STAGE 2 THEME — 'Age Three to Six'
MUSIC — 'Peter and the Wolf'
FORMAT — Teacher asks the students to remember back when they were between the ages of three and six, and to re-enact what they did. What did they feel, what did they see, what did they know, what did they like, what did they play,—for example, they may have played hopscotch or 'creepy-up'.
This movement lesson can then be followed up by a short period in which the children can discuss

what they enjoyed when they were younger. For example, they may have liked their mother, flowers, lollies, climbing trees and so on. These various likes and dislikes, or pastimes or whatever, could also be illustrated with relevant pictures which the teacher has brought along. It would be an even better idea if each student could bring at least one picture or photograph depicting some favoured aspect of childhood. The students could then attempt a piece of writing which in some way recalls their childhood.

41 SPOUTS

AIM: **The aim is to encourage enjoyment in reading, to introduce children to a wide variety of reading materials and to give them opportunity to read aloud to the class.**

LEVEL: **Secondary.**

The idea comes directly from an old issue of *The Use of English*. A spout is the opportunity for each child to read to the class something of his or her own choice. You may have a regular spout lesson each week or keep spouts in reserve for an odd lesson or part of a lesson.

Students choose passages that they can read within five minutes. One lesson may be devoted to humour spouts, others to adventure spouts, description spouts, poem spouts, protest spouts etc. One matriculation class of mine spent lesson after lesson on fantasy spouts, which is how I came to discover Tove Jansson's delightful *The Finn Family Moomintroll*, written for ten-year-olds. Recently we had 'youth culture/generation gap' spouts, which led to the inclusion in the class library of two new volumes of verse:

Shapcott, T. W. (ed), *Australian Poetry Now* (Sun Poetry Series)

Horovitz, M. (ed), *Children of Albion—Poetry of the Underground in Britain* (Penguin).

42 THE POWER OF OBSERVATION

AIM: **This is a unit of work designed to exercise and develop the student's powers of observation and to provide opportunity for oral and written expression.**

LEVEL: **Primary and Secondary.**

1 Lead your students on a short excursion around the neighbourhood. On your return ask numerical questions about what they saw. For example: 'How many cars did you see?' 'How far did we walk?' 'How many houses did we pass?'
Take them out for another walk. This time when you return ask colour questions. For example: 'What colours were on the ground?' 'What were the colours of the cars that passed?' 'What was the brightest coloured house you saw — the dullest?' Most of the class will have anticipated the numerical questions of before and will not be able to respond well to the colour questions.
Repeat this exercise again and again. Take them to different places, Ask them increasingly more difficult questions having to do with numbers, colour, size, shape and quality. Keep your students guessing and keep the game quality of the exercise alive. It will not be long before a good many of your students can record a vast amount of information about what they see.

2 Instruct your class to completely describe, in black and white only, a place, person or object. When the class is finished writing, choose one student to read out his description and another to illustrate that description on the blackboard using only the details the writer has provided.
It usually does not take long for the class to realize how ridiculous written descriptions can become and how difficult it is to transpose written details into visual details. At this point the teacher can

emphasize how good observations and communication can be hindered by omission or illogical writing. Do not pass up the possibilities of humour and incongruity which strange or incomplete descriptions will provide. For example, I had one student who conscientiously described his scripture teacher from bald head to patent leather toe, but somehow neglected to include even a stitch of clothing in between. With some amount of fast talking, I persuaded the artist at the blackboard not to fill in with his own imagination the remaining details.

3 Provide an instamatic camera loaded with colour slides. Ask for volunteers who would like to take a picture (invariably everyone will volunteer). Instruct each individual to take one picture only, not to tell anyone what he has photographed, and upon completing that photograph to write a short commentary about it. After all of the slides have been developed and returned, screen the slides in class and read the commentary for each one. Without any teacher comment at all the students will begin to realize how remarkably unique and different each individual's observations can be. A second chance at the camera will result in an even more spirited and creative approach by most students.

4 Stage a happening in the class. A small act, quickly culminated, is the best kind for this exercise. The act should seem spontaneous and very real; it should come as a surprise. After the happening has occurred instruct the class to recreate every detail of the occurrence that they can remember. Each individual should write down a step by step account. After the accounts have been completed, choose several to be read aloud in class. Then stage the happening again. Most students will be surprised at how much detail they overlooked and how much dialogue they forgot.
A particularly effective happening in my class was staged by two boys who were known to be the best

of friends. I caught them one lunch hour, swore them to secrecy, then had them rehearse a fight. Upon my signal during a particularly dreadful comprehension lesson the boys launched into an enthusiastic battle.

This particular happening led students to discuss not only their own fallibilities of observation but the problems connected with eye witness accounts as well.

5 Suggest that a group of students make a short movie recording some observations they have made. Tell them that you will provide an instamatic movie camera and the film if they will provide the ideas and the script for such a venture. The learning possibilities of this exercise are enormous. Not only do the students learn the simple mechanical procedures of making a movie, but they also learn the more subtle and refined techniques of observing and recording what they have observed.

An unusually entertaining and unique project which one group of students undertook had to do with the careful observation of mannerisms. They compared the different ways of doing very usual things. A sequence was done on the various styles of eating a sandwich. They simply went around at lunchtime and recorded the more pronounced styles that they observed. Other sequences were done on the way various individuals sit down, the ways they walk and the different gestures they make while talking.

Film-making allows not only the practice of observing and the creative techniques of recording observations, but, perhaps, the most effective way of communicating observations.

NOTES **All of these exercises are designed to encourage activity. The power of observation is primarily an active power. They are not intended to be especially 'testable', although each individual teacher can devise tests for them. The suggested activities for the thematic unit on observation are**

just a sampling, a fraction of what can be done. For example, I have not even touched upon observations in great literature. Even within the limited framework of the suggested activities there is tremendous room for variation, adaptation, and flexibility.

43 MAN AND HIS EARTH

My 4th year third term theme is 'Man and his Earth'. (In 1st term: 'Men as Brothers'; 2nd term: 'Being Different'). The following is a list of assignments done.

1 Students were asked to design — plans and cross section — one of the following:
   a. a recreation park in Glenelg;
   b. a block of flats in Brighton;
   c. a new housing estate in the Adelaide Hills;
   d. a youth centre as part of a new suburban shopping centre;
   e. a new Adelaide airport.

   Their plans and drawings were assessed for creativity and feasibility by the Art S.M.

2 They had to include a written report of various features of their plans — particularly how they allowed for the environment. I assessed this report.

3 I played them June Christy's *It's so Peaceful in the Country* and Cat Steven's *Where do the Children Play?* and asked them to compile a list of advantages and disadvantages in country and city living. A blackboard summary was made.

4 Visits were made to News Ltd. and Chryslers (Australia). Written responses were from the following alternatives:

   Either (1) a description of the workings of a large newspaper or production line, or (2) a poem: 'The Press' or 'Noise' or 'Boredom' or (3) a short story: 'Sabotage' or 'The Machine Master' or 'The Big Story'.

5 Linked with these responses was the comprehension exercise from *Insight through English* — W. W. Gibbon's 'The Release' — a discussion of the role of work. Philip Larkin's 'Toads' (*Mainly Modern*) provided additional thoughts.
Continuing the theme:
subsequent lessons will discuss:
a. pollution
b. 'progress'
c. the fate of the world. (Furber's fable: 'The Last Flower' from *Voices of Man* series and Art Buchwald's cynical 'Is there Life on Earth?' from *Breakthrough*).

Books for reference:

Henry Lawson, *Fifteen Stories*
Dickens, *Bleak House, Hard Times*
Orwell, *1984*
Slessor, *Portrait of Sydney*

44 SNAKES

AIM: **This lesson idea developed from a suggestion by Michael Marland that film loops of spiders and snakes were a powerful stimulus to children's writing. It's aim is broad — to introduce children to poems and prose and to encourage discussion and writing.**

LEVEL: **Junior secondary.**

1 The first lesson began with a film. The local Education Department film library had shown three likely films:
Reptiles of Australia (Australia) 1962, 11 minutes.
Snakes (USA) 1963, 11 minutes.
The Tiger Snake (Australia) 1963, 10 minutes.
I ordered all three and found *Snakes,* with excellent colour photography, crisp editing and good commentary, the best for my purposes. The children had the chance to glance over a simple

quiz designed to direct their attention to certain parts of the film.

2 The film evoked a fine, shuddering response and established just the right mood for reading a section from Jack McLaren's *My Crowded Solitude* — the superb, terrifying account of the snake that came at night.

3 In the second lesson we 'marked' the quiz simply to recall the film and the children were invited to relate their own encounters with snakes. Somehow we digressed and discussed snake venom, milking snakes, inoculation, etc. There was still time, however, for me to distribute multiple copies of *Poetry Workshop,* which has a number of snake poems. The idea was for the students to read through them and find a poem or a section of a poem that they liked.

4 A further lesson began with a reading of D. H. Lawrence's 'Snake' and after discussion led on to my reading poems and parts of poems that students had selected.

5 We split up into small groups so that students could discuss their own ideas for writing. A range was suggested — poems, personal encounters, short stories, descriptions of the snakes in the film, etc. Those who were not yet ready to discuss their ideas were directed to extra reading. Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife', Kipling's 'Rikki Tikki Tavy' and informative material in general books on reptiles and snakes.

6 A later lesson gave opportunity for students to read out their work. A suggestion that someone might bring a snake or that we visit the zoo was never taken up.

45 RETELL A STORY

AIM: Initially this lesson aimed to introduce children to the wealth of literature in myths and legends. It is valuable too as controlled oral language activity.

LEVEL: Primary or junior Secondary.

1 Select from the very wide range of folk literature stories and legends and myths that tell a simple story yet have a wealth of detail that makes them dramatic and interesting.

2 Choose four stories which when read and recorded will take no longer than five minutes each. If possible have four different accomplished readers from the staff or other classes.

3 Divide the class into four groups so that each group hears a different story. The plan then is for each of the stories to be retold by students and then told again.

4 The following complex plan can be operated by an experienced teacher with a cooperative class but can easily be simplified by reducing the number of stories.

Stage One — students in four groups listen to teacher-made tapes (A, B, C, D) of myths and legends.

Stage Two — half the students in each group retell their story to an individual student in another group. At the same time each student from the other half of the group listens to a retelling from a person in another group.

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
Tell story A Listen to story D	Listen to story A Tell story B	Tell story C Listen to story B	Listen to story C Tell story C

Stage 3 — change so that the tellers become the listeners and listeners become tellers.

Stage 4 — change again so that the story which each person hears is third hand.

5 At this point many possibilities open up. One or two members of the class may relate the last story

heard and comparison may be made with the tape-recorded originals. Discussion may centre on what it is that remains as the core of the story, what is lost, how much detail is retained and what additions and alterations have been made.

6 Even secondary children enjoy making up their own legends and fairy tales. Barry Carozzi's 'The Greatest Juggler in the World' might be discussed and used as a model for students' stories.

46 CONTINUOUS STORY

AIM: This is essentially an opportunity to write with enjoyment but depending on the teacher's emphasis valuable lessons can be learned about the techniques of writing. One valuable aspect is that the student writes with the knowledge that his contribution will be immediately read with interest by one of his peers.

1 Call for suggestions for the first line of a story. Write about five of these on the blackboard. Alternatively read the opening two or three sentences from school library novels which begin in an exciting and interesting way.

2 When each student has a sheet of paper explain that everyone is to select one of the openings and begin to write a story. They have five minutes. They should not attempt to finish the story.

3 At the end of five minutes students should hand their sheet to someone else who will read what has been written and continue the story, in any way he likes.

4 This may be continued for any length of time, but four writing sessions of five minutes give time for a few stories to be read out before the period ends.

47 COLLOQUIAL AND SLANG

AIM: **Practical research into the changing slang of the school.**

LEVEL: **Upper secondary.**

1 Have each member of the class list as many school slang words as possible giving current meanings.

2 A sub-group from the class draws up a short list which it submits to the class for final validation.

3 The final list can then be submitted to groups of pupils from junior classes to find those words with the greatest staying power.

4 At this stage an examination of the possible origins of words can be made. The fact that much school slang is regional and temporal means that its origins and the methods of word formation can be easily observed. As well, the reasons for the greater permanence of some words can be discussed.

NOTES **The origins of words with long traditions of use can be traced through former pupils, especially if the school has a regular magazine or newsletter for them. Also interesting is an examination of the death of words no longer in use.**

Reference suggestions:

G. W. Turner, *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand*, Longmans, 1966, Chapter 5: 'Colloquial and Slang'. W. S. Ransom (ed), *English Transported*, ANU Press, 1970, Chapter 4: J. S. Gunn, 'Twentieth Century Idiom'. Sydney J. Baker, *The Australian Language*, Sun Books, 1970. Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* and *A Smaller Slang Dictionary*, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1961.

THE VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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Bruce Dawe: the man down the street

This pamphlet has been produced specifically for Sixth Form pupils studying Bruce Dawe's *Condolences of the Season*, but it is a useful introduction to the poet for teachers and senior pupils generally.

Dr. I. V. Hansen, acting for VATE, has brought together a number of critical reviews of Dawe's poetry, and this collection is enhanced by a biographical note by John McLaren, a statement on poetry by Bruce Dawe himself and some of his previously unpublished verse.

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